



Speech by

Hon. T. McGRADY

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

Hansard 13 April 1999

EXPLOSIVES BILL

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development) (4.02 p.m.), in reply: I take this opportunity to thank the member for Charters Towers and the members for Logan, Burdekin, Mackay and Nudgee. In particular, I thank the Opposition spokesman for the way that he has supported this Bill. We offered him a briefing which he accepted, and I believe he has played a very constructive part in the debate today. It is pleasing to see that, when sensible legislation is presented in the Parliament, one gets bipartisan support for it.

As has been said by many speakers, this legislation has taken some six years to arrive in the Chamber. It was started by me as a Minister of the Goss Government and was continued by my predecessor, Mr Gilmore. I now have the pleasure and the honour of bringing it to fruition. A number of matters have been raised that I would like to respond to. However, I start by saying that, like electricity, explosives are good servants but they are a very dangerous master. That is something that we should take into account.

Before I respond to the points that were raised, I thank the member for Mackay for the contribution that he made. This is a very important time in his life because his wife, Erin, has just given birth to a son, Liam Daniel.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr McGRADY: We will save those sorts of comments for the christening. On behalf of all members, I congratulate Mr Mulherin on the birth of his second son. Liam Daniel is a good Irish name, and he will be a mate for Declan who is about two years old. There is something about Mackay, because the former member for Mackay, Ed Casey, had a fairly large family. The way that young Mr Mulherin is going, I think there is a possibility that he may—

Mr Schwarten: He'll certainly be here as long as Mr Casey was. Whether he has as many kids is another matter.

Mr McGRADY: I take the member's point.

The member for Charters Towers raised a number of issues. He said that some retailers had expressed the concern to him that, if passed, the legislation may generate more paperwork for them. The Bill will not generate extra paperwork for notifications and record keeping for the sale of explosives. However, the requirements to notify of explosive incidents have been broadened to include all dangerous and, indeed, potentially dangerous explosive incidents. There are only a few such incidents and I do not believe that the increase in notification will be onerous.

The other point that the member for Charters Towers raised concerned the possibility that additional licensing fees will be introduced. The licences to be issued under this legislation will be detailed in regulations that will be prepared over the coming months. There will be lots of discussion and negotiation with industry. It is not thought that there will be any new licences or, indeed, any increase in licensing fees. There will be a consolidation of licences where feasible, which will decrease the number of licences in areas such as the repealing of some of the regulations covering fruit ripening and the elimination of the need for duplicating licences such as at gun shops or shops selling powders.

The member for Charters Towers said that he hoped that there would be no change to the controls on the transporting of petrol. As we discussed privately, that comes under a different Act and is not part of the proposed legislation.

The member for Charter Towers asked the legitimate question: can the Governor in Council make regulations without the matter coming back to the Parliament? As he knows, regulations are made by the Governor in Council and notified in the Government Gazette. They have to be tabled in the Assembly. If Opposition members are not happy, they know that they can——

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr McGRADY: Yes. The member asked whether section 135 applies to all explosives. This is a regulation-making provision. It can apply to any explosive that is dangerous to the public or property. This can be achieved by using nationally agreed standards and codes of practice.

The member for Burdekin asked about guns and so on. All I would say is that this legislation does not cover guns and the like. It covers ammunition, but this legislation does not change the Act in that regard. There is no change at all.

I have answered the questions that have been raised. In conclusion, I thank Bob Sheridan of the Department of Mines and Energy for the tremendous amount of work that he put into the legislation. I also thank all of the staff who assisted, including my personal staff who have worked long and hard to get this legislation to the Parliament. In conclusion, I reiterate my thanks and appreciation to the Opposition, through the member for Charters Towers, for its help and support.
